



King County

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Department of Development and Environmental Services

Quarterly News

Letter from the Director

Dear DDES Customer:

DDES employees and customers had an excellent year in 2006! In an effort to capture applicant opinions and make customer-friendly adjustments to our permitting process, DDES hired an outside consultant to complete satisfaction surveys in 2005 and 2006. Our consultant interviewed a large number of recent customers to get the most accurate picture possible. Review the 2006 Customer Satisfaction Survey Fact Sheet on the next page to see some of the most important conclusions.



Stephanie Warden

We also received anecdotal input from citizens and applicants in 2006. The two comments that made me the most proud of DDES employees and our elected leaders have been reprinted inside **our new and improved newsletter**. Enjoy reading this update and have a great 2007!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Warden, Director
Department of Development
and Environmental Services

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2006 DDES customer satisfaction survey fact sheet

Almost six in ten permit customers rated their overall satisfaction with the service provided by DDES either a four or a five on the five-point scale, where five means “extremely satisfied.” This is an approximate **10% improvement** over responses to the same question asked during the 2005 surveys.

Customers’ ratings of the quality of different methods of obtaining information from DDES show that the highest-rated methods involve personal contact with DDES staff: “From DDES staff in the field” and “in-person in the DDES Permit Center” were rated highest (at least **70%** rating a four or a five on the five-point scale where five means “excellent”). The positive ratings pertaining to DDES staff in the Permit Center appear to be a direct result of the free technical assistance offered weekday mornings. This program has been extremely successful and property owners frequently comment after receiving the service that they have a new appreciation for the spectrum of technical disciplines required to answer their questions fully. DDES is also pleased that staff working in the field are communicating so effectively with property owners. This speaks well of the professionalism exhibited by DDES staff and their commitment to work positively with property owners. DDES field staff routinely emphasize education in an effort to prevent the need for corrective action.

King County DDES staff members received their highest ratings for “**being courteous and professional,**” followed by “**making fair decisions.**”

Customers involved with DDES inspections groups as part of the permitting process gave high ratings to DDES inspectors for “courtesy and professionalism,” “conducting thorough inspections,” “performing inspections when scheduled,” and “providing information about applicable codes and requirements.” On these items, **78% to 87%** of customers rated inspectors a four or a five on the five-point scale where five is “excellent.” As noted above, this speaks well of the professionalism exhibited by DDES field staff and their emphasis on working collaboratively with property owners and project managers.



With the customer in mind, DDES takes a timeout to assess project management systems and the fee estimate program

Twice in November key DDES staff met for a half day to discuss our single-point-of-contact project management systems and our up-front fee estimate program. To get fresh and varying perspectives, staff participants included a cross-section of professional disciplines. Staff talked about what is working and what needs improvement.

Specifically, the participants covered pre-application meetings, fee estimates, fee tracking, time management, time tracking, communication, status reports, finance and billing. A large number of excellent ideas came from this exercise and it was time well-spent. In general, there was agreement among participants that project management is working and we are seeing fewer fee waivers, fewer permits are being sent to collections, projects are better progressing on-track, applicants are happy to be receiving status reports and communication among sections has greatly improved.

In 2003, applicants submitted 325 fee waivers. Now that project management and up-front fee estimates have had time to work, **fee waiver requests have been cut in half.** The number of calls to our billing hotline has diminished dramatically as well.

DDES has and will continue to keep stakeholders involved. We are always interested to get input from our valued applicants. Further customer-friendly reforms will be instituted as needed.

What is the public saying about DDES and King County?

"Working with DDES during my home remodel has been a lot easier than I expected. Our permit was issued in a timely manner, and the inspection process has been very straightforward and efficient. Even when our contractor had to correct a problem, the re-inspection happened quickly, avoiding inconvenient delays."

— Gary Butcher (11-14-06)

"The recent flooding should provide a wake-up call to all those folks who complained so bitterly about the Critical Area Ordinance requiring 65% vegetative cover to be protected. There has always been flooding in the Puget Sound regional rivers, but the destruction to homes is a direct result of poor building practices. The developers insist on the right to develop in areas which aren't always suitable. Overdevelopment on hillsides, such as is happening in the Duvall area has caused increased run-off in the Valley. In many areas, no vegetative cover is kept to counter the surface water run-off from roofs, driveways and roads. Just driving into Duvall is an example of this—a hillside of homes completely denuded of trees. Here in Bear Creek, the flooding was not an issue. There is enough vegetative cover in the form of buffers and trees to protect the unincorporated areas from surface water run-off. The many environmental protections in Bear Creek have worked in the past, and are continuing to work. The 65% vegetative cover is not only vital, it is a minimum needed for protection from flooding. I am proud of living in the Bear Creek Community, where common sense environmental rules have made this a special place to be."

— Wendy Walsh (12-4-06)

Getting to yes with DDES educational workshop: The residential permitting process

Date: January 31, 2007

Time: 8:30 AM to Noon

Place: Master Builders Association offices in Bellevue (335 116th Ave SE in Bellevue)

Register at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/ddes/lusd/RegisterForm.htm>

Workshop Objectives:

DDES speakers will cover several important topics at this workshop (Q & A included).

- Critical Areas Designations and the Critical Areas Review Process
- Permit Review Stations-Submitting Quality Applications and Avoiding Costly Errors
- Customer Service Initiatives-Project Management

Who should attend?

Professionals in real estate, construction, development, appraisal, permitting and engineering. Property owners who are planning new construction or a change of use in unincorporated King County should also attend.

Registration Procedures:

Cost for the workshop is \$20. Customers can register on-line or over the phone by calling Cathy Ortiz at 206-296-6704. Payment must be submitted to DDES at: 900 Oakesdale Ave. SW, Renton, WA 98055 (please indicate on your check that it is for the workshop and write "Attention: Cathy Ortiz" on your envelope). Please submit payment no later than January 26th. The workshop will be closed after the first 85 people submit registration forms.

Directions to the Master Builders Association offices:

From I-405 Southbound: Take exit 13B for NE 8th St. east. Turn right on 116th Ave. NE. Turn right into the second driveway after SE 1st St. (marked Private/SE 5th St.) to enter the MBA parking lot.

From I-405 Northbound: Take exit 12 for SE 8th St. /116th Ave. NE exit. Keep to the left and take the ramp to 116th Ave. NE and turn left. Turn left into the first driveway on the left (marked Private/SE 5th St.). If you miss the SE 5th St. entrance; turn left at SE 1st St. (just south of Bellevue City Hall). Turn left into the parking lot between the office building and I-405. Immediately beyond the office building are MBA parking spaces, with the MBA building on the far side of the parking lot.



King County using man's best friend to fight arson

Misti, a two-year-old Yellow Labrador Retriever, is the newest member of the King County Fire/Arson Investigation Unit. DDES Director Stephanie Warden, King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn, Fire Marshal John Klopfenstein and State Farm Agent Jim Sullivan introduced Misti to the public on Nov. 1, 2006 at a press conference. Misti's skills in "sniffing out" the cause of fires give her a "nose up" on arsonists. **Misti is the first State Farm arson dog in Washington.**

Assistant Fire Marshal Lawrence Canary explained Misti's skills in detecting flammable liquids often used in arson crimes at the press conference. Canary, Misti's handler, recently completed the five-week canine-accelerant detection school sponsored by State Farm Insurance and certified by the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. The Fire Marshal's Office is a division of DDES.



*Critical Area
Designations
required
prior to
health
review
submittal*

Changes to the application process for plats, short plats and CUPs in the rural areas

The Critical Areas Ordinance package, which went into effect on January 1, 2005, specifies that customers seeking Land Use Application approval in the rural area must secure a Critical Areas Designation (CAD) from DDES prior to applying for well and/or septic installation approval from Seattle-King County Public Health. We have phased implementation to focus on residential building permit applications. The process has been successful and we are now prepared to extend the requirement to plat, short plat and CUP applications in the rural area. Starting January 1, 2007, a completed CAD will be required before submittal to health and Land Use applications will not be processed without health department approval.

The anticipated benefit to the applicant is that the CAD allows DDES to confirm whether critical areas exist on the property and, if so, the type and exact location. This should save time during the formal application review process. The designation is valid for five years.

DDES has always included critical areas analysis within the application review process. However, this new standard for an initial CAD moves critical areas review to the very beginning of the process for plats, short plats and CUPs. Identifying the critical area constraints can prevent costly plan changes and time delays during the application review phase.

How to get started

To apply for a Critical Areas Designation, please visit the DDES Web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes and review Customer Information Bulletin 21, Critical Areas Review. Customers can also call Steve Bottheim, Critical Areas Section Supervisor, at 206-296-7144.

King County
Department of Development
and Environmental Services
900 Oakesdale Avenue Southwest
Renton, Washington 98057-5212

Permit Number: B00L0000
Date Issued: 01/01/2007
Expiration Date: 01/01/2008
Permit Status: ISSUED

Construction Permit

Permit Type, Subtype: DWELLING, SINGLE
Title: JOE SMITH NEW SFR
Description: CONSTRUCT NEW 5 BEDROOM SFR W/ATTAC
Location: LOT 00 CANTERBURY CREST DIV 2
List of Parcels: 100000-0000
Site Address: 99999 NE 176TH ST KC
Valuation: \$599,999.90
Applicant Name: CONSTRUCTION COMPANY LLC

Comments and Conditions

1. Work Subject to Approved Plans and Conditions. Work authorized by this permit is subject to the approved plans and corrections shown thereon and the attached conditions of permit approval. Failure to comply with all conditions once construction is begun may necessitate an immediate work stoppage until such time as compliance with the stipulated conditions is attained.

2. Posting on the job site.

2007 Adopted School Impact Fees

School impact fees are assessed and collected on new residential dwelling units in the unincorporated portion of a school district for which an impact fee has been established by King County. The fee is collected at the time of permit issuance or final plat approval. The amount of the fee is based on the fee schedule that is in effect at the time of permit application or final plat approval and is collected in accordance with KCC 21A.43.050. Impact fees are updated annually and adopted by ordinance. The following new school impact fees go into effect on January 1, 2007:

School District	Single family fee		Multi-family fee	
	2006	2007	2006	2007
Auburn	\$5,681	\$5,657	\$1,536	\$1,229
Federal Way	3,393	3,018	895	856
Fife	3,510	3,629	1,621	586
Issaquah	5,115	6,136	804	1,264
Kent	4,775	4,928	2,940	3,034
Lake Washington	2,996	2,975	337	307
Riverview	0	538	0	124
Snoqualmie Valley	3,810	3,992	1,095	798

In addition to the school impact fee, a non-refundable administrative fee of \$65 per dwelling unit is charged to those projects subject to a school impact fee.

For more information on school impact fees, see Customer Information Bulletin Number 46 School Impact Mitigation. More information is available in the DDES lobby, online at www.metrokc.gov/ddes or by calling Chris Ricketts at 206-296-6750.

Rural home-based businesses enjoy increased flexibility under new ordinance

Code changes proposed by King County Executive Ron Sims and approved by the King County Council would make it easier for farmers to make a living on their farms and for rural residents to operate a small home-based business. The changes were suggested by rural residents and business-owners during an extensive Rural Economic Strategies public process launched last year by Sims. The Rural Economic Strategies, among other ideas, called for more review of county regulations and procedures with the idea of removing unnecessary obstacles to farmers and home-based businesses and thereby improving the rural economy.

When Executive Sims proposed the reforms he said, "Together, we are mapping out a vision to strengthen the rural economy and preserve a way of life that benefits not only people who live in rural areas, but everyone in King County. Rural residents are not only offering innovative ideas that can make a positive difference, they are also providing terrific and necessary feedback on the ideas they feel will not work in their communities."

Details for the new ordinance can be found at: <http://www.metrokc.gov/exec/bred/business/Projects/Rural.htm>

Questions? Just ask us

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Director

Stephanie Warden206-296-6700

Public Affairs Director

(media relations, publications, web content, customer service)

Tim Attebery206-296-6682

Human Resources Manager

Kathy Graves206-296-6725

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION

Division Director

Jim Schaber206-296-6684

Finance Management Supervisor

(billing procedures and practices)

Elaine Gregory206-296-7139

Information Systems Supervisor

Tom McBroom206-296-6706

BUILDING SERVICES DIVISION

Division Director

Mike Dykeman206-296-6761

Intake and Screening Supervisor

(permit applications)

Chris Ricketts206-296-6750

Technical Screening/Building Review Supervisor

Pamela Dhanapal206-296-6731

Building Inspections Supervisor

(residential and commercial structures)

Bernard Moore206-296-6762

Site Engineering and Planning Supervisor

(drainage review, parking, traffic, landscaping)

Jim Chan206-296-6740

Fire Marshal

(inspections, fire investigations, fire system permits)

John Klopfenstein206-296-7071

LAND USE SERVICES DIVISION

Division Director

Joe Miles206-296-7179

Engineering Review Supervisor

(final plats and short plats, lot line adjustments)

Jim Sanders206-296-7178

Current Planning Supervisor

(preliminary plat and short plats, SEPA, EIS, CUPs, shoreline permits)

Lisa Dinsmore206-296-7171

Site Development Services Supervisor

(clearing, grading and forestry permits)

Randy Sandin206-296-6778

Critical Areas Supervisor

(wetlands, streams, geo hazards)

Steve Bottheim206-296-7144

Land Use Inspections Supervisor

(site infrastructure)

Steve Townsend206-296-7204

Code Enforcement Supervisor

(building, environmental and health hazard complaints)

Deidre Andrus206-296-6656

CUSTOMER SERVICE NUMBERS

DDES Customer Information Line206-296-6600

Permit Application Appointments206-296-6797

DDES Billing Hot Line206-296-6659

Alternate Formats Available

206-684-2046 TTY Relay: 206-689-4665

Erosion and sediment control measures

Each Fall DDES publishes information on erosion and sediment control (site runoff) requirements for construction sites in unincorporated King County. This information has been compiled to inform the building industry of current regulations, practices and restrictions during the wet season, which runs between October 1 and April 30 each year.

In addition to providing revised and updated information on Best Management Practices (BMPs) for residential and small construction sites, DDES staff will emphasize code restrictions on clearing and grading work. This information can be found on the DDES web site at www.metrokc.gov/ddes. Simply click on *Permit Information* and then click on *Erosion/Sediment Control and the ESA*. This web page also outlines erosion and sediment control requirements at construction sites as well as final site stabilization requirements.

DDES is committed to an effective erosion and sediment control program to protect our streams, lakes, wetlands and the aquatic species that inhabit them. Additional technical assistance for erosion control on project sites is available. DDES inspection staff is also available to offer suggestions to help builders and developers stay in compliance with County Code and permit conditions. At the same time, it is a builder's responsibility to implement and maintain controls on the job site. We look forward to working with our customers to meet this goal.

For additional details, please contact Bernard Moore, DDES Building Inspections Supervisor, at 206-296-6762.